SHORTIA

NEWSLETTER OF THE

WESTERN CAROLINA BOTANICAL CLUB

SPRING 2014

Shortia galacifolia

Oconee Bells

WESTERN CAROLINA BOTANICAL CLUB

President	Helen Smith	Secretary	Joy Charlebois
Vice-President	Jeanne Smith	Treasurer	Alan Graham

MEMBER NEWS

Field Trip Cancellations: On occasion field trips must be cancelled or changed either for weather conditions or other reasons such as road closings. Such changes are sent out by email to all members by 7 AM the day of the field trip. If you do not have email access, we will try to reach local members by telephone by 7 AM. If you are in doubt, contact a leader or co-leader whose telephone number is listed on the schedule. When a field trip is cancelled, no member will be at the contact point. Programs are cancelled when Henderson County Schools are closed (see http://www. hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org) but NOT necessarily canceled because of delayed opening.

New Members: Marion Crounse, Carrol Rush, Tryon
Kathleen Sanders, Flat Rock
Gillian Watters, Hendersonville
Jerry and Beth Redmond, Clemson, SC
Owen Carson, Brevard

FOLLOWING IN THE BARTRAM'S FOOTSTEPS

The Cherokee Garden Library, part of the Kenan Research Center at the Atlanta History Center, which owns a first edition of William Bartram's *Travels* (1791), is planning a series of lectures and exhibitions from March to June, 2014, on the Bartrams and their legacy. For more information, contact scatron@atlantahistorycenter.com.

RAMBLINGS 2013

As you all remember, the spring and early summer of 2013 was loaded with rainy days. Three of the first nine walks had to be cancelled. Also, the rain seemed to play havoc with the normal blooming periods. **Twin Bridges**, an annual favorite, was noticeably weak in quantity and quality of blooming plants. Old favorites, **Pearson Falls** and **Station Cove**, seemed to be unaffected by the unusual weather patterns.

The planned overnight to the Smokies had to be cancelled due to a lack of signees. However, a few diehards wanted to see **Big Creek,** so we went there on a day trip. Reportedly, the group was not disappointed, as Yellow Toadshade (*Trillium luteum*) was particularly abundant.

We had a guest leader, Tim Lee, at **Jones Gap State Park**. He knew where to find the "Jones Gap" Trillium, which was a special treat for all of us. The Latin name for this species has not been determined.

Sandy Schenck, the guest leader at **Green River Preserve**, is the owner of the property and regaled us with local stories about the area. French Broad Heartleaf (*Hexastylis rhombiformis*) was a noteworthy plant found during the walk.

We have visited **Lewis Creek** in the past, but, since then, a boardwalk-assisted path was constructed in the bog area. We visited in April and again in July to get a seasonal perspective. Ragged Fringed Orchid (*Platanthera lacera*) was a noteworthy plant in July.

Wolf Mountain Overlook was a much-visited location. We took every chance we had to incorporate a stop there as part of another walk. The diversity of blooming plants throughout the season is a continual treat.

Sky Valley Road was a personal favorite for me, as I think it provides a summer equivalent to the springtime locations regarding the number of different blooming plants that we find there. Rock Portulaca (*Talinum teretifolium*) actually takes two trips, as it only blooms in the afternoon.

An unscheduled side trip provided an interesting opportunity to see the Three Birds Orchid (*Triphora trianthophora*) in bloom. The bloom only lasts one day, so it is hit or miss to find one. We followed up a tip about a spot near the Pisgah Ranger Station where they had been found. It provided us with a "let's stop and see if they are blooming" moment on several walk days.

Ken Borgfeldt

MAYAPPLE

The leaves of Mayapple grow from underground stems on the forest floor. The stems grow horizontally, branching through the leaf litter, gradually expanding until dozens of leaves grow in a path that can be several meters across.

Native Americans knew that the plant had powerful properties. At very low doses, extracts from the plant were used as laxative and to kill intestinal worms; higher doses, which would be fatal if ingested by people, were put onto newly sown corn to protect the seed from crows and insects.

Modern studies of Mayapple have found that the plant's chemicals can kill viruses and cancer cells. Mayapple extract is now used in creams that heal warts caused by viruses. After the extract has been chemically modified, it becomes a chemotherapy against cancer.

Bumblebees pollinate the flowers of Mayapple, flying under the leaves to reach the nodding white blooms. Later in the summer, the flowers mature into small yellow fruits, each about the size of a small lemon. The fruits are favored by box turtles; only those Mayapple seeds that have traveled through the gut of a turtle will germinate.

Mayapple, ginseng, and yam are all small plants that overwinter as nutritious underground stems or roots, rich in defensive medicinal chemicals that play havoc with the guts, nerves, and hormones of their enemies—marauding mammals and insects.
(From *The Forest Unseen: A Year's Watch in Nature* by David George Haskell.)

A rite of spring for many folks is a stroll through the Azalea Garden at Biltmore. Chauncey Beadle, a Canadian horticulturist hired by Frederick Law Olmsted in 1890, was responsible for it. Beadle served as estate superintendent from 1909 until his death in 1950. He had a special fondness for native deciduous azaleas and collected them throughout the Southeast. In 1940, he gave his entire collection of azaleas to Biltmore.

BOOK REVIEW

Henry David Thoreau, ed. Bradley P. Dean. *Wild Fruits.* New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2000.

Henry David Thoreau died peacefully in the front parlor of his mother's home on Main Street in Concord, Massachusetts, on the morning of May 6, 1862. Tuberculosis, a common killer of the time, took him at just forty-four years of age. Among the mass of papers he left behind was the manuscript of *Wild Fruits,* published in 2000 for the first time. The final harvest of a great writer's last years, *Wild Fruits* presents Thoreau's sacramental vision of nature—a vision compelling in part because it grew out of an approach to the natural world at once scientific and mystical.

Although Thoreau began writing *Wild Fruits* in the autumn of 1859, the manuscript was part of a much larger project begun early in that decade. During this period, he began cultivating an interest in science, particularly botany. He built a "scaffold" inside the crown of his hat to hold plant specimens and started carrying a botanical guide with him on his afternoon walks. By mid-November 1850 he was regularly dating his journal entries and had stopped culling pages from his journal notebooks—both changes that ensured a complete and accurate record of his field observations.

In December 1850, he was elected a corresponding member to the Boston Society of Natural History, an honor that included lending privileges at that organization's impressive library.

The spring of 1851 marks the middle of this important transitional period for Thoreau. He began reading books on natural history and purchased a blank book, which he called his "Common Place Book," for recording passages from his natural history readings. Within the next couple of months he compiled the first of what would become many hundreds of phonological lists and charts on every conceivable seasonal phenomenon, such as the migration cycles of birds or the leafing, flowering, fruiting, and seeding of plants.

With the realization that his remaining life's work was to probe the "rich and fertile mystery" of nature and describe the "divine features" he discovered, Thoreau's great period of transition came to an end.

From the Introduction by Bradley P. Dean, a staff member of the Thoreau Institute in Lincoln, Massachusetts.

TRAILING ARBUTUS, by Emily Dickinson, 1875

Pink - small - and punctual -
Aromatic - low -
Covert - in April, Candid - in May -
Dear to the Moss -
Known to the Knoll -
Next to the Robin
In every human Soul -
Bold little Beauty
Bedecked with thee
Nature forswears Antiquity.

Trailing Arbutus, of the *Ericaceae* family, has a delicate allure. The Pilgrims named it the "Mayflower" when they discovered it in the woods. A creeping, evergreen sub-shrub, *Epigaea repens* is found on north- or east-facing slopes in our North Carolina upland woods where fallen oak leaves are blown away and will not smother the undulating oval leaves of this valuable native wildflower. Soil requirements include moist, well-drained, acid qualities. Oddly, Trailing Arbutus also thrives in the Eastern turkey oak woodlands where scorching white sands offer a wildly divergent habitat! *E. repens* succeeds easily in both arenas, but no other species associated within the forest can boast of this unique ability.

Shrubby in nature, Trailing Arbutus forms terminal and lateral, very fragrant white and/or pink flower clusters from previous year's buds. These are often seen as early as February here in western Carolina (or even before that, weather permitting). After flowering, the plant sends out 1-3 whorls of new growth from the tips of the previous season's wood; then unfolds its stiff leathery leaves. These are held at a 45-degree angle to best absorb the available sunlight streaming through the trees. The plants are rather slow growing.

Propagation of Trailing Arbutus by stem cutting is easier than by seed (which needs light to germinate). Take 1-2" lengths of stem with their leaves, 8-10 weeks after flowering. Dip them in hormone powder, and plant in a 1:1 mixture of peat/perlite. Keep in the shade; and put in a cold frame through the winter. Well-rooted cuttings are ready to put out the following spring, and sitting the plants in their natural habitat will ensure success in the garden.

Native plants are wondrous things that fill our lives with color, fragrance, and beauty. There is great value in preserving wildness, and in "putting something back." Foster deep respect and love for all things green.

Karen Koelling

NATIVE PLANTS IN THE NEWS

Forgive me the editor's privilege of touting my alma mater, but I couldn't resist writing about a July 26, 2013 article in *The New York Times* by Lisa W. Foderaro, "Vassar Revives Garden Nurtured by Early Promoter of Native Plants."

I remember that, even in my day as a student, the Vassar College campus had been designated a New York State botanical garden. I especially enjoyed the "Shakespeare Garden," which has specimens of every plant mentioned in William Shakespeare's works.

Several students, working with biology professor, Meg Ronshein, have resurrected a native plant garden that was cultivated by botany professors and students in the 1920s, long before native species became a rage, and then forgotten for decades. The garden was the life's passion of Edith A. Roberts, a professor of plant science, who set out to document every species of plant found in Dutchess County. The four-acre site was called the Dutchess County Outdoor Ecological Laboratory. According to Prof. Ronshein, "She was trying to understand what plants grow together, where they grow and how they reproduce. That's what an ecologist did. This was cutting-edge science and she brought it to Vassar."

After Dr. Roberts retired in 1948, the garden, which runs along a creek called the Fonteyn Kill, was maintained for a few years. [I remember taking walks there in the '50s.] But by the 1960's it had been abandoned.

Dr. Roberts wrote a series of articles in *House Beautiful* magazine and then in a 1929 book, *American Plants for American Gardens,* in collaboration with Elsa Rehmann, a landscape architect, which has long-since gone out of print.

The article goes on to discuss other New York gardens with native plants. "Both the New York Botanical Garden, in the Bronx, and Brooklyn Botanic Garden turned a spotlight on native plants. The Bronx garden includes 454 species found east of the Missisippi River. In Brooklyn, a newly expanded Native Flora Garden, designed by Darrel Morrisona prominent landscape architect and proponent of native plants, made its debut in June." [I chanced to meet one of the Brooklyn horticulturists this fall on a busman's holiday at the NC Arboretum.]

If you go on a vacation to the beautiful Hudson River Valley, do include the Vassar campus along with FDR's Hyde Park, the Vanderbilt Mansion, West Point, and many other fabulous venues.

Paula Robbins

SHORTIA
c/o Paula I. Robbins
100 Wesley Drive, apt. 111
Asheville, NC 28803

FIRST CLASS

SHORTIA

A quarterly publication of the Western Carolina Botanical Club

Vol. XXXVI No. 1

Editor: Paula I. Robbins Proof-reader: Lucy Prim
Spring 2014

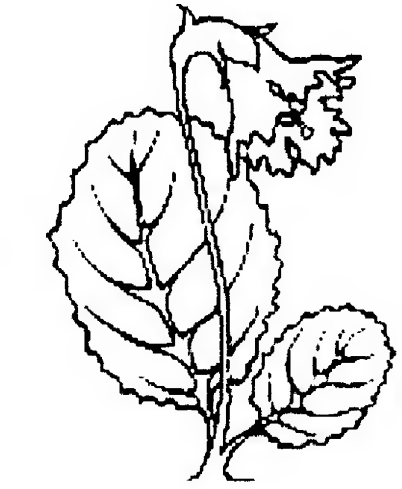
The purpose of the Club is to study the plants of the southern Appalachian Mountains and the Southeast through field trips and indoor meetings. Membership is open to all. Individual/family memberships are $15. New members joining from the period July 1-December 31 pay $8. All memberships are renewable on January first of each year. Send dues to Alan Graham, 544 Tip Top Road, Brevard, NC 28712.

SHORTIA

NEWSLETTER OF THE

WESTERN CAROLINA BOTANICAL CLUB

FALL 2014



Shortia galacifolia

Oconee Bells

WESTERN CAROLINA BOTANICAL CLUB

President	Juanita Lambert	Secretary	Joy Charlebois
Vice-President	Penny Longhurst	Treasurer	Alan Graham

MEMBER NEWS

Field Trip Cancellations: Occasionally, field trips must be canceled or changed either for weather conditions or other reasons such as road closings. Such changes are sent out by email to all members by 7 AM the day of the field trip. If you do not have email access, please call the leader, co-leader or recorder (whose phone numbers are listed on the schedule) to be sure that the walk is going to go as planned. Indoor programs are canceled when Henderson County Schools are closed (see http://www.hendersoncountypublicschoolsnc.org) but NOT necessarily canceled because of delayed opening.

Any change of address, email or telephone number, please inform Alan Graham, 544 Tip Top Road, Brevard, N.C.. 28712. 828-884-3947

President's Message

by Juanita Lambert

Why did you join the Western Carolina Botanical Club? Was it to continue a long-term interest in botany, take up a newly-inspired interest, or perhaps just to get out and explore the Southern Appalachians at a leisurely pace? We probably each have our own unique reasons.

My involvement with plants goes back to my pre-teen years, helping my mother in her vegetable and flower gardens, (I hated those petunias,) in the suburbs of Trenton, NJ, and then in the city. As a teenager and later, my interests were more “social”, but I couldn't get away from those petunias. It wasn't until Larason came back from Nepal that I got out into the natural world more. I think our first “date” after he came back was a walk in the woods of a nearby state park.

After we married and settled down in the Washington, DC area, we started hiking in Shenandoah and local parks, but my primary motivation on these walks was berry picking. I also did some gardening of my own in our back yard. Even in our work and travels overseas, I didn't get into botanizing; however, once we retired and moved to Hendersonville, a whole new life opened up to me.

Sometime around the beginning of this century, Anne Ulinski introduced us to the Botanical Club, and we quickly joined. We were already members of ECO, but our membership in WCBC became much more active, and I first served as a recorder in April of 2002. Shortly thereafter, I was elected to be recording secretary.

Gradually I learned the plants we encountered on the Club's outings, and found that I really enjoyed being with, interacting with, and learning from Club members. In 2004, I began volunteering at Bullington Gardens, helping Larason establish the Native Woodland Garden, and in 2006, when Bonnie Arbuckle joined me, followed shortly thereafter by Frances Jones, the core of the Bullington Botanical Bunch was formed. To get me even more thoroughly involved, I was elected President of the Botanical Club in 2006, and served for a period of two years.

Obviously, the Club is a substantial part of my life now, and I thoroughly enjoy it. I have learned so much botany from the Club outings and the Botanical Bunch activities. And now I think that I enjoy the social aspects of the club as much as the botanizing.

So, coming full circle, what does the Club mean to you, now that you've been a member for a while?

PROFILE OF BOARD MEMBERS

The Club began its 42nd year with two new officers and two returning ones. I will introduce this team to you.

Juanita Lambert, President Juanita was originally from New Jersey. She spent the bulk of her 34 year federal career with the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, DC and during the last half dozen of those years, she evaluated food aid programs. She has always been interested in gardening, plants, and trees and especially studying the parts of a flower which she learned in junior high school. She has learned much botanically from the WCBC members, not only finding and identifying the plants on her property but co-leading and recording field trips. She was the Board Secretary for six years, has served previously as Board President for two years, and continues to represent the club at Bullington Gardens as part of the "Bullington Botanical Bunch." Juanita says, "It's still a lot of fun."

Penny Longhurst, Vice President Penny was brought up about 40 miles south of London, England, in a house that was built in 1601, was located a mile from the nearest road, and had no electricity. Kerosene was used for lighting and the

refrigerator: cooking was done on a coal-burning Rayburn stove. However, there was indoor plumbing! They finally got electricity when she was about 16.

After attending university in London and Vancouver, Canada, she moved to West Virginia in 1981.

She worked doing research on the urinary bladder in the medical schools of WVU, the University of Illinois at Rockford, the University of Pennsylvania, and Albany Medical College, NY before retiring with her husband, Howard (also a biologist), to Brevard in 2002.

Penny volunteers at SAFE, does trail maintenance within Connestee Falls, and hikes a lot. Penny and Howard completed the Carolina Mountain Club Waterfall Challenge in 2011, and continue to add new waterfalls to their bucket list. In addition, she enjoys having time to look more closely at the different plants, birds, and animals found in the Appalachians, as well as in National Parks in the US and other countries.

Penny's new hobby is making videos of the great outdoors. They can be seen at youtube.com/user/colong7034.

Joy Charlebois, Secretary Joy was born and lived in the city of Detroit until 1990, when she moved to Wilmette, Illinois and remained until retiring to Etowah in 2003. She spent her time raising 4 children, teaching dance exercise and working part-time at Northwestern University in Evanston, where she coordinated the Fulbright Scholarship Program in the graduate school. WCBC has introduced her to the wonderful world of wildflowers, and, more importantly, to wonderful friends.

Alan Graham, Treasurer Born and raised in Dayton, Ohio. Alan bailed out to Atlanta in 1967 to avoid Ohio weather. As a mechanical engineer by training, he spent the last 30 years of his career in technical sales. He moved to Brevard in 2004 and was interested in the variety of plant life. He joined Master Gardeners to learn more, but found their plant identification was not thorough enough and moved on to the Botanical Club. He participates in most of the field trips and says he has learned to identify most local trees and is working on the other plants.

New Members

Diane Bauknight Diane has lived in WNC since 1982. A recent graduate of the Blue Ridge Naturalist program at the NC Arboretum, she has a special interest in learning more about local flora, especially wildflowers. Diane is the State Farm Agent on Long Shoals Road in Arden.

Owen Carson Owen Carson is an Atlanta native who was transplanted into the mountains of Western North Carolina. After graduating from Brevard College in 2008 with a BS in Environmental Science and Minor in Geology, Owen worked his way into the role of Plant Ecologist at Asheville's Equinox Environmental, and now consults on a wide variety of projects for Equinox, including botanical and natural community surveys, natural resource inventories and monitoring, and stream and wetlands delineation. He also holds a NC Pesticide Applicator's License and has over 4 years experience managing invasive exotic plants. In addition, he is a Certified Associate Ecologist with the Ecological Society of America. Owen is married to Sarah Carson, and together they raise their twins, Liam and Hazel. His passion for exploring native plants and habitats fuels his free-time activities, which include gardening, backpacking, climbing, and drawing.

Karen Lawrence Karen is a nature photographer and has retired here in Franklin NC with her husband and son. She worked with the Film and Video Department of the Department of Natural Resources of Georgia for many years as their still photographer on many projects. Her images are in many state parks in Georgia, the closest being Tallulah Gorge. In the past she has photographed a lot of wildlife. Now she is busy photographing our wildflowers and is involved with several groups here, SAPS-Southern Appalachian Plant Society and the Franklin Bird Club, and provides photographs to both. She also works with Bob Gilbert who writes about plants for the Franklin Press and she provides him with images to accompany his articles. She is now working on a book of his collection of articles.

Bebbie MacCary Bebbie MacCary, a native of Atlanta, lives in Manhattan and has recently become a homeowner in Sherwood Forest. A retired educator, she is an enthusiastic bird watcher, theater goer and art lover. When in North Carolina, she greatly appreciates the opportunity to learn from the members of WCBC.

The Sassafras Tree

by Lucy Prim

There are only three species of Sassafras in the world, two in Asia, and our native tree, Sassafras albidum. Our Sassafras is usually a small, dainty looking tree, but able to grow quite large if the situation is favorable enough. The largest Sassafras in the world is probably one growing beside the library in the little town of Owensboro, Kentucky. The tree is about 77 feet high and 21 feet in circumference. In 1957, a road widening project was going to involve cutting this tree down. But a lady named Grace Rush saved the tree by standing beside it with a shot gun saying she'd not allow it to be cut down The governor of Kentucky was called to sort out the situation, and he said to let the tree stand. So, the road widening project went on without harming the tree, and there that tree grows to this day, right beside the road, cars whizzing past and probably nobody paying much attention to the biggest, most famous Sassafras in the world.

If you go on a walk in DuPont Forest, you will see many sections of the woods where the rangers have done prescribed burns, attempting to give a set back to the rampant stands of rhododendrons and mountain laurels and reduce the fuel load on the forest floor in case of a fire. As I was walking in this area over the summer, I noticed how one of the main trees coming up in this burned area is the Sassafras tree. Bright green and growing at a great rate, the little Sassafras trees are springing up all over. Sassafras is an early succession species benefiting from fire that clears out the canopy shading the forest floor. The bright sunlight that is suddenly able to hit the ground gives the Sassafras a tremendous boost, and up the little trees come, the three-leaf shapes and the little supple green branches rising up out of the ashen ground at a great, hearty rate. As other, taller growing trees come along, the shade intolerant Sassafras trees are likely to die. They need sunlight to thrive.

In the late 1500s, when our continent was first being explored and settled by Europeans, the Sassafras tree was one of the most important exports, second to Tobacco. This happened because a Spanish physician, Nicholas Monardes, who was very interested in the medicinal properties of plants from the New World, wrote a book, "*Joyfull Newes out of the Newe Founde Worlde*" in which he said that the most wonderful plant of all in the New World was the Sassafras tree. He thought it was a cure for all sorts of maladies, including syphilis. In the mid 1500s, English explorers were told to fill the ships returning to England with Sassafras roots, and the cost of this plant rose to great heights. But soon it sadly became clear that the Sassafras wasn't a good cure for anything at all, and its importance as an economic commodity faded away. Its reputation as a health aid was dealt a further blow when the FDA, in 1960, banned products made from Sassafras. It was discovered that one of its constituents, safrole, was a suspected carcinogen. Sassafras is no longer used to flavor root beer or chewing gum. If you look on the US Dept of Justice web site, there's an Advisory

to the Public informing us that Sassafras oil is sometimes used to make the drug Ecstasy. It says that criminals are “always searching for sources of safrole” and people who handle safrole “need to know their customers so as not to become an unwitting supplier to a clandestine MDMA supplier.” (MDMA is a term for Ecstasy.) So, the Sassafras tree has fallen from its great heights of being a supposed cure all and a great economic commodity for the New World, to a product banned for carcinogenic properties and sought out by shady drug makers, and anyone mysteriously and overly interested in it becomes a suspicious character in the eyes of the Justice Department. But although it has fallen from its great heights, one innocent use of Sassafras is in the kitchen, and if you go to the spice section of a supermarket, there you will find it in a little glass jar, under the name Gumbo File.

Although not a very good plant for humans to eat, the Sassafras is one of several host plants for the Spicebush Swallowtail. The female Swallowtails lay their eggs on the leaves, usually the smooth leaves rather than the pubescent leaves, (a tree will have both types) and the caterpillars emerge and feed on the leaves at night. During the day, the caterpillars often hide themselves away in a folded leaf. The caterpillars that eat pubescent leaves grow more slowly than the ones that eat the smooth leaves, and they are less healthy, more likely to die. So possibly, the pubescence helps the Sassafras survive the damage done by the rapacious little spicebush swallowtail caterpillars.

At the edge of my mother's woods, across the lawn from her house in South Carolina, stands a little grove of Sassafras trees, each one a slender, smallish tree, graceful and airy, and in the late summer and fall the leaves glow from the shadows with the loveliest shades of pink and salmon and orange, golden yellow and a deep purplish red. Over the years, a few attempts to transplant the small trees to other areas in the garden have met with disappointing failure. This is because the trees spread vegetatively by root sprouts, and by removing one tree from the parent tree's tap root, the chance of survival is very dim. So, now, no efforts to move plants disturb this little grove at the edge of the woods. There they grow, glowing beautifully in the fall, the most beautiful spot in the garden for a few weeks every year.

Joe and Mary Standaert's New Book, "Swannanoa Valley"

by Lucy Prim

When we took our walk to Glassmine Overlook this summer, Joe and Mary Standaert were our very able and knowledgeable leaders, pointing out the various plants we see in those high elevations. We stopped that lovely bright afternoon at the big rock where we always stop to have lunch. It was a bright, sunny afternoon and the beautiful mountain scenery stretched out all around us, melting away into a blue mist as it receded into the distance. As we sat there on the rock, Joe told us one interesting story after another. As he talked, he pointed out the locations he was referring to, some down below in the vast Asheville Watershed with its many thousands of acres reaching out below us, and other times he pointed to the various mountain peaks off to the east. He regaled us with fascinating bits of history such as where the old route to Mount Mitchell had been and where the wonderful old Victorian house, "Gombroon" had been. I was fascinated and very impressed with Joe's knowledge. Then he told us some exciting news that explained all this expertise. He and Mary had just finished writing their second book!

For quite some time, they have been gathering up old postcards of the Montreat and Black Mountain area and they now have a wonderful collection. This new book, called "Swannanoa Valley", is part of Arcadia Publishing's Postcard History Series. Each page features one or two old postcards from Mary and Joe's collection, with a description or explanation of each picture and the history the postcard is depicting. These old postcards are a fascinating glimpse back in time, to the days when tourists would come to the mountains by rail or horse and carriage. We can see pictures of the stagecoach that used to take people on trips to the Swannanoa Gap, pictures of ladies in long dresses, sitting side-saddle, going on sightseeing excursions, a picture of Mt. Mitchell as it looked in 1890, many pictures of lovely old lodges, sanatoriums, churches and retreat centers, Warren Wilson College, Montreat, the Parkway, fancy Victorian houses and simple log cabins, railroads and children's summer camps. There is a picture of Black Mountain with oxen carts making their way down the center of an unpaved Main Street.

It is delightful to sit down with this book and page through it, looking at all the postcards and reading the interesting remarks and anecdotes accompanying each picture. Thank you so much, Joe and Mary, for writing this wonderful book!

Recorder Ramblings

by Ken Borgfeldt

So far this has been a squirrely season for both blooming plants and weather conditions. We seem to have had a difficult time trying to figure out if it is going to rain and if not will we see the plants blooming that we expect.

The schedule started innocently enough at **Station Cove** where we found Toadshades (*Trillium cuneatum*) blooming in abundance.

Then came the rain as two of the next three walks (**Twin Bridges** and **Glassy Mountain**) were cancelled due to rain. Sandwiched in between, Millie Pearson held a successful walk and luncheon at **Pearson Falls**. In addition to the usual wide variety of plants, we found Green Violet (*Hybanthus concolor*) and Walking Fern (*Asplenium rhizophyllum*).

Table Rock State Park provided the largest selection of different violets that we have seen in one spot. Nine different species were found in bloom!

Jones Gap State Park presented the weather - blooming season issues. The walk was cool and drizzly. The Jones Gap Trillium blooms were sparse. Fortunately the ranger station had a covered porch so we had a dry spot for our lunch.

The first club visit to **Connestee Falls** was a real treat. In addition to all of the water features we found Climbing Fumitory (*Adlumia fungosa*), Clinton's Lily (*Clintonia umbellulata*), and Appalachian Bunchflower (*Veratrum parviflorum*) in abundance.

Rain reared its ugly head and **Baxter Creek/Big Creek** was cancelled.

Jones Farm returned us to a sense of normalcy. Betty Jones was able to show us a wide variety of plants, including Gay Wings (*Polygala paucifolia*), two species of Pitcher Plants and Lily-leaved Twayblades (*Liparis lilifolia*). We lunched at Lizzies's Falls, a spot recently cleared by Betty's son.

The run of good weather continued at **Davidson River Trail**. This trail could be called Hexastylis heaven because of the large number of plants you can find including Large-flowered Heartleaf (*Hexastylis shuttleworthii*) and French Broad Heartleaf (*Hexastylis rhombiformis*). We also found some weird Sweet Shrub (*Calycanthus floridus*), weird in the sense that there were three different looking blooms that led us to wonder if some cultivars had been mixed in.

Usually when we visit the **NC Arboretum** we focus on the azaleas. The group who attended this year's walk developed a complete list of all of the different plants that they found. The noteworthy plant was Fire Pink (*Silene virginica*).

The visit to **Ferrin Knob Trail** was considered a success because we found Yellow Lady Slippers (*Cypripedium calceolus*) and Pink Lady's Slipper (*Cypripedium acaule*) in bloom!

On average I would have to say that we had a good series of walks during the periods when we were able to dodge the raindrops.

September

by Helen Hunt Jackson

The golden-rod is yellow;
The corn is turning brown;
The trees in apple orchards
With fruit are bending down.

The gentian's bluest fringes
Are curling in the sun;
In dusty pods the milkweed
Its hidden silk has spun.

The sedges flaunt their harvest,
In every meadow nook
And asters by the book-side
Make asters in the brook.

From dewy lanes at morning
The grapes' sweet odors rise;
At noon the roads all flutter
With yellow butterflies.

By all these lovely tokens
September days are here,
With summer's best of weather,
And autumn's best of cheer

Hunting the Three-birds Orchid

by Ken Borgfeldt

Last year we had a great deal of success finding the Three-birds Orchid (*Triphora trianthophora*) in bloom. This year I was looking forward to early September, the time period when we found blooming plants last year. In early August I received an email from Cindi Probst referencing a blog written by Jim Fowler detailing a temperature dependence on the plants blooming schedule. With his permission I have reproduced a portion of the the blog entry:

"Well folks, I am so excited! Today, I went to an area of the Pisgah National Forest north of Brevard, North Carolina in search of some mid-summer orchids — specifically, *Platanthera ciliaris* or **Yellow Fringed orchid** and *Spiranthes lacera* var. *gracilis* or **Southern Slender Ladies'-tresses orchid**. I did actually find those two species in bloom, but before I got to the location where those two were growing, I stopped at my favorite spot for *Triphora trianthophora* or **Three-birds orchid**.

This is a spot that my naturalist friend, Neil Jacobs told me about several years ago. He and his wife, Jen Modliszewski found it while he was fishing and she was photographing wildflowers along the Davidson River. I've been back to the site several times each year for the last five or six years, enjoying the **Three-birds orchids** in season.

Funny thing about this particular orchid species: It blooms only after a few, rather specific meteorological conditions have been met, and then for only a few hours that day. After those flowers are past, it may be a week or two before it blooms again. Here are the specific conditions I rely on to predict a wave of blooms:

There must be at least a 5-degree (F) drop in morning low temperatures over 48 hours. Then, 48 hours later, there will be a mass blooming — all the flowers at a certain stage of "readiness" will all open together. It's that simple! Over the next few weeks to a month, there may be several of these mass bloomings, so if you miss the first one, there's usually another.

So, for the past few days, I've been checking my charts to see if a bloom will be happening anytime soon. I refer to the website, **www.wunderground.com/weatherstation/WXDailyHistory**, and go to the weather station information for Pisgah National Forest. I check the morning low temperatures and plot them on a simple graph. From Sunday, July 27 through Wednesday, July 30, there was a 15-degree (f) drop in morning low temperatures — from 67.5 degrees (F) down to 52.5 degrees (F)! This meant that 48 hours later (today, Friday, August 1), there should be a mass blooming.

On our way to the Blue Ridge Parkway for some wildflower photography, my Atlanta photography buddy, Alan Cressler and I had visited the **Three-birds**

orchid site the previous Saturday, but saw only tightly closed buds. Today, however, was a different matter. I don't think I've ever seen so many of these dainty little orchids in bloom at one time. Most of the plants are scattered, single plants or groups of three or four, but there can be some rather large clumps. "
If you would like to read the entire article including some fantastic photos of the orchid it can be found at
http://www.jfowlerphotography.com/?p=3733

Botanically Speaking

by Helen Tullar

I found a very funny poem in one of the first Shortias, one that came out in March, 1980.

No tiny seed nor noxious weed
Escapes our close attention
From allium to zizzia
Or dandelion to gentian.
We poke and pry and scrutinize
And peer in mossy crannies
And when a slope's too slippery
We slide down on our fannies.
We photograph and carry books
For solemn consultation
On species new as we pursue
Our botany education.

Please send me any Botanical articles or stories or tips on plant identification, or poems that you think would be good to include in one of our Shortias. If you are a new member who hasn't had a biography in Shortia, please let me know! I want to include everybody.

Lucy Prim
828-693-6580
32lucette@gmail.com

REMINDER:Membership Dues are Due January First

It is coming time to renew our membership in Western Carolina Botanical Club!

SHORTIA
c/o Lucy Prim
48 Oak Gate Drive
Hendersonville, NC 28739

FIRST CLASS

SHORTIA

A quarterly publication of the Western Carolina Botanical Club

Vol. XXXVI No. 2

Editor: Lucy Prim Proof-reader: Dave Lellinger
Fall 2014

The purpose of the Club is to study the plants of the southern Appalachian Mountains and the Southeast through field trips and indoor meetings. **Membership is open to all**. Individual/family memberships are $15. New members joining from the period July 1-December 31 pay $8. All memberships are renewable on January first of each year. Send dues to Alan Graham, 544 Tip Top Road, Brevard, NC 28712.